

A NEW CARNIVORE FROM CHINA.

By GERRIT S. MILLER, Jr.,

Curator, Division of Mammals, U. S. National Museum.

Among some mammals collected by Mr. Arthur de C. Sowerby in northwestern China and the Ordos Desert are two skins of a spotted polecat readily distinguishable from the western *Vormela*^a *peragusna*^b by a peculiar inversion of the color pattern of back. Regarding the history of the specimens Mr. Sowerby writes: "The larger skin was brought to me in a very poor condition. The skull was missing, as were also the leg bones, while the tail was torn in two, and one eye was torn. I offered large rewards for a complete specimen, but though several Mongols and Chinese were induced to enter the Ordos in search of them, I obtained nothing more than a small dry skin which accompanies the above-mentioned specimen. From what I could gather the animal is not at all common. It frequents spots where trees exist, and climbs freely. The Chinese name 'Ma-nai-ho' would also signify this fact, the last syllable 'ho' meaning monkey or ape. They are sometimes caught in traps set for foxes. Their skin, however, has no market value. They are very savage when caught. The above facts were given and confirmed repeatedly by natives who had traded in the Ordos."

VORMELA NEGANS, new species.

Plate 17.

Type-specimen.—Adult male (skin only), Cat. No. 155001, U.S.N.M. Taken by natives in the Ordos Desert about 100 miles north of Yu-ling-fu, Shensi, China. Original No. 92.

^a 1884. W. Blasius, Ber. Naturf. Ges. Bemberg, vol. 13, p. 9. Distinguished from the true polecats by the presence of a well-developed metaconid in lower carnassial and by the contact of hamular process with audital bulla.

^b 1770. *Peregusna*, nova *Mustela* species, Guldenstaedt, Nov. Comm. Akad. Imp. Petrop., vol. 14, p. 441 (Banks of the River Don, southern Russia).

1771. *Mustela sarmatica* Pallas, Reise Russ. Reichs, vol. 4, append., p. 453 (near mouth of the Volga, southern Russia).

Diagnosis.—Like *Vormela peregusna* but light markings paler and more extensive, those on posterior half of back confluent, so that this region is yellow mottled with brown instead of brown mottled with yellow; underparts, forelegs, and inner surface of hindlegs black instead of dark brown.

Measurements.—Type (from skin, apparently not much stretched): Head and body, 340 mm.; tail, 210.

Specimens examined.—Two, both from the Ordos Desert.